

REMARKS

There are now pending in this application Claims 1-14 and 16-84, with Claims 1, 29, 46 and 74 being the independent claims. Claims 1-6, 16, 17 and 27-35 have been amended and Claim 15 has been cancelled. Claims 37-84 are newly presented.

The newly presented Claims 37-84 have been added to provide Applicants with an additional scope of protection commensurate the disclosure. Support for the newly added claims may be found, for example, on page 7, line 7, et seq. of the specification. No new matter has been added.

In the Official Action dated October 20, 1999, the title of the invention was objected to as not being descriptive. In this regard, the title has been amended. Favorable consideration is requested.

Claims 1-4, 18-20, 23-32, and 36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b), as anticipated by Japanese Patent No. 8-220893 (Nanba). Claims 5-12, 15-17 and 33-35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over Nanba in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,832,351 (Takekoshi, et al.). Claims 14, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over Nanba in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,809,387 (Takeuchi, et al.). Claim 13 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), as unpatentable over Nanba in view of Takekoshi, et al. and further in view of Takeuchi, et al. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections are respectfully requested in view of the above amendments and the following remarks.

The rejection of the claims over the cited art is respectfully traversed. Nevertheless, without conceding the propriety of the rejections and solely to advance prosecution, Claim 15 has been cancelled and Claims 1-6, 16, 17 and 27-35 have been amended to recite even more clearly various novel features of the present invention, with particular attention to the Examiner's comments. Support for the proposed amendments may be found in the original application. No new matter has been added.

The present invention, as now recited in independent Claim 1, relates to an image forming apparatus that comprises image bearing means for bearing a toner image, and an intermediary transfer member. The toner image is electrostatically transferred from the image bearing means onto the intermediary transfer member, and then transferred from the intermediary transfer member onto a transfer material. The intermediary transfer member includes a first layer, a second layer on the first layer, and a third layer on the second layer, for receiving the toner image from the image bearing means. The volume resistivity of the first layer is smaller than that of the third layer, and a volume resistivity of a third layer is smaller than that of the second layer.

In another aspect, independent Claim 29 relates to an intermediary transfer member onto which a toner image is electrostatically transferred from the image bearing means, and include the features of the intermediary transfer member in Claim 1.

The Nanba patent discloses an image forming device using an intermediate transfer body 20. The intermediate transfer body has a first endless belt 21 and a second endless belt 22, wherein the belts are separated by a path changing means, and only the second belt 22 is electrically discharged by discharging means 90 and 95. Nanba fails to disclose or suggest the above mentioned features of the present invention. In particular, the Nanba patent fails to disclose or suggest that a volume resistivity of the first layer is smaller than that of the third layer, and a volume resistivity of the third layer is smaller than that of the second layer, as disclosed and claimed in independent Claims 1 and 29.

The remaining art of record, as understood by the Applicants, fails to disclose or suggest the above mentioned features of the present invention. Accordingly, these references do not compensate for the deficiencies of the Nanba patent.

In another aspect, newly presented independent Claim 46 relates to an image forming apparatus that comprises image bearing means for bearing a toner image, and an intermediary transfer member. The toner image is electrostatically transferred from the image bearing means onto the intermediary transfer member, and then transferred from the intermediary transfer member onto a transfer material. The intermediary transfer member includes a first layer and a second layer for receiving the toner image from the image bearing means. The

first layer is coated with a second layer and the second layer has a volume resistivity smaller than that of the first layer.

In another aspect, newly presented independent Claim 74 relates to an intermediary transfer member onto which a toner image is electrostatically transferred from the image bearing means, and recites features that generally parallel those of independent Claim 46.

The Nanba patent fails to disclose or suggest at least the feature where the first layer is coated with a second layer, where the second layer has a volume resistivity smaller than that of the first layer, as disclosed and claimed in independent Claims 46 and 74.

Applicants also have reviewed the remaining art of record and believe that the claims are allowable thereover, either alone or in combination with the Nanba patent.

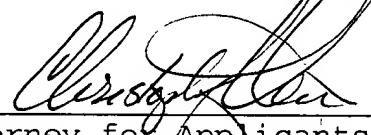
For the above reasons, Applicants submit that independent Claims 1, 29, 46 and 74 are allowable over the cited art. The dependent claims variously depend from one of these independent claims and are believed allowable for the same reasons. Moreover, each of these dependent claims recites additional features in combination with the features of its respective independent claim and is believed allowable in its own right. Individual consideration of the dependent claims respectfully is requested.

Applicants believe that the present amendment is responsive to each of points raised by the Examiner in the Official Action and submits that the application is in

condition for allowance. Favorable consideration of the claims and early passage to issue of the present application earnestly are solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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